

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 JAKART 04795 131033Z
ACTION EA-12

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S E C R E T JAKARTA 4795

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PORG, PEPR, ID
SUBJECT: INDONESIA TO REFURBISH ITS NON-ALIGNED IMAGE

1. DURING OUR DISCUSSION ON APRIL 12, FOREIGN MINISTER MOCHTAR KUSUMAATMADJA OUTLINE HIS FORTHCOMING TRAVEL PLANS, INCLUDING ATTENDANCE AT THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE IN DAKAR AND THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE IN KABUL. HE NOTED THAT ONE OF HIS MAJOR OBJECTIVES AS FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD BE TO BRING INDONESIA'S FOREIGN POLICY INTO A "MORE BALANCED POSITION". HE FEELS THAT DURING THE PAST DECADE INDONESIA HAS VEERED A BIT TOO MUCH TOWARD THE WEST, WITH THE RESULT THAT ITS CREDIBILITY WITH AND INFLUENCE ON THE THIRD WORLD HAS DECLINED. HE SAID ADAM MALIK, AS FOREIGN MINISTER, HAD ALSO HOPED TO BRING ABOUT A SLIGHT REORIENTATION OF INDONESIA'S FOREIGN POLICY BUT FAILED BECAUSE HE ACTED AND TALKED PUBLICLY WITHOUT INFORMING HIS OWN IMMEDIATE STAFF OR CHECKING THINGS IN ADVANCE WITH THE MILITARY. MOCHTAR SAID HE WILL AVOID THESE PITFALLS. HE ALREADY HAS APPROVAL FROM THE INDONESIAN MILITARY TO BRING INDONESIA'S POLICIES SLIGHTLY MORE INTO LINE WITH THIRD WORLD THINKING.

2. MOCHTAR SAID HE WANTED US TO UNDERSTAND THAT HIS MAKING "CERTAIN STATEMENTS" IN THE FUTURE DID NOT IN ANY WAY REFLECT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 JAKART 04795 131033Z

ANTI-AMERICAN OR ANTI-WESTERN ATTITUDES OR POLICIES. HE HAS THE HIGHEST ADMIRATION FOR PRESIDENT CARTER AND FOR THE EFFORTS BEING MADE BY HIS ADMINISTRATION TO PUT FOREIGN RELATIONS AROUND THE WORLD ON A MORE MORAL AND RATIONAL FOOTING. INDONESIA VALUES ITS CLOSE AND SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES AND WANTS TO PRESERVE AND STRENGTHEN THOSE TIES. AT THE OUTSET OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION INDONESIA AND SOME OF ITS NEIGHBORS

HAD BEEN CONCERNED THAT THE U.S. WAS "ABANDONING" SOUTHEAST ASIA AND "TURNING THE AREA OVER TO THE JAPANESE". THESE CONCERNS HAVE LESSENED DURING THE PAST YEAR, AND INDONESIA IS PARTICULARLY PLEASED WITH THE FIRM DEMONSTRATION OF U.S. INTEREST AND SUPPORT SHOWN BY THE VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT. MOCHTAR REITERATED THAT HE HOPED WE WOULD NOT TAKE ANY STATEMENTS HE MIGHT MAKE IN THESE VARIOUS NON-ALIGNED FORUMS PERSONALLY OR AS ANY INDICATION OF A DESIRE BY INDONESIA TO WEAKEN ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES

3. I TOLD MOCHTAR THAT, SPEAKING PERSONALLY, I WAS CONFIDENT THAT OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WAS SUFFICIENTLY STRONG AND SUFFICIENTLY MATURE TO HANDLE THE SITUATION HE WAS DESCRIBING. AT THE SAME TIME, WE FELT INDONESIA HAD PLAYED A VERY VALUABLE AND CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN THE THIRD WORLD AND WE WOULD REGRET SEEING THAT ROLE REDUCED BY INDONESIA'S SIDING WITH THE MORE EXTREME NON-ALIGNED POSITIONS. I SAID I HOPED WE COULD KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH AS VARIOUS SPECIFIC ISSUES CAME UP. MOCHTAR AGREED THAT THIS WOULD BE USEFUL. HE SAID INDONESIA DID NOT SUPPORT THE MORE RADICAL NON-ALIGNED ELEMENTS AND THAT EVEN IF HE PERSONALLY WERE INCLINED TO GO IN THAT DIRECTION, WHICH HE WAS NOT, THE INDONESIAN MILITARY "WOULD NOT LET ME". HE SAID THE CHANGES HE WAS DESCRIBING WERE MORE COSMETIC THAN SUBSTANTIVE AND WE COULD BE ASSURED THAT ON BASIC ISSUES INDONESIA WILL CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO PLAY A HELPFUL ROLE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 JAKART 04795 131033Z

4. COMMENT: MOCHTAR WILL BEAR CLOSE WATCHING AS HE LAUNCHES HIMSELF INTO THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA AS INDONESIA'S NEW FOREIGN MINISTER. IN NO SENSE A RADICAL, HIS WORLD OUTLOOK IS ON THE WHOLE PROBABLY CLOSER TO OURS THAN THAT OF HIS PREDECESSOR. BUT AT THIS POINT HIS AMBITIONS AND SELF-ESTEEM SEEM TO BE SOMEWHAT HIGHER THAN HIS PRINCIPLES. THESE TRAITS COMBINED WITH A PENCHANT FOR INTRIGUE AND A SURPRISING LACK OF DISCRETION MAY MAKE HIS A LESS THAN RELIABLE COLLABORATOR IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS, AT LEAST DURING HIS "BREAK-IN" PERIOD. MOCHTAR PROBABLY RIGHTLY SENSES THAT GAINING INDONESIA A MORE PROMINENT LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE G-77 IS HIS BEST OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A PERSONAL MARK ON INDONESIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND THAT A BIT OF FLAK TOSSED IN OUR DIRECTION MIGHT HELP. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE IS AWARE THAT ALIENATING THE UNITED STATES WOULD NOT BE IN INDONESIA'S OWN INTERESTS, NOR WOULD IT SIT WELL WITH THE POWER-CENTER HERE. HIS REMARKS TO ME WERE UNDOUBTEDLY DESIGNED TO DIMINISH THAT RISK. I SIGNALED TO MOCHTAR THAT, WHILE WE ARE BROADMINDED, OUR TOLERANCE FOR SHENANIGANS HAS ITS LIMITS. WE MAY HAVE TO MAKE THIS POINT MORE FORCEFULLY IN THE FUTURE.

MASTERS

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NNN

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